E 396
.W375
Copy 1

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.
Chap. E 396
Shelf .W375
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

MR. WEBSTER'S

ANDOVER ADDRESS

AND

HIS POLITICAL COURSE

WHILE

SECRETARY OF STATE.

The Publishers have no authority to designate the authorship of the following pages; but from various circumstances, they infer the probability, that they were written by

PROF. STUART, OF ANDOVER.

1877

ESSEX COUNTY:

PUBLISHED FOR DISTRIBUTION.

1844.

E396
.W375

MR. WEBSTER

AND THE

ANDOVER ADDRESS.

NUMBER I.

The writer of the remarks which follow was present at the mass meeting in Andover, and heard the address which is designated by the inscription above. He has seen various criticisms in the public journals on the performance in question. With some of these he agrees for substance in opinion, while from others he feels himself obliged widely to dissent. In respect to those criticisms, (if they may be so called), which exhibit merely the feelings of party violence and rancour, he has little or nothing to say; as they are not founded on any sober inquiry into the merits of Mr. Webster's performance, much less on any aesthetical principles of judgment and decision, they do not demand, for the present purposes of the writer of these remarks, any distinctive notice or recognition. In what way, indeed, will any thinking and judicious man undertake to refute mere railing accusations? Will he make use of argument? No argument, nor even demonstration, would have any weight with the authors of such accusations. Their decisions proceed merely from violence of feeling and party bitterness. How can this be controlled by argumentative criticism? The truth is, that the greater a man's merits are who is opposed to their views, and the more distinguished his performance is, the more do they rail, and the more severe is their sentence of condemnation. It would be a hopeless task to oppose candid reasoning and fair argument to criticisms of this cast. One could only "revile again" in return for reviling, an undertaking in which, on grounds of propriety, decency, self-respect, and peaceable demeanor, the writer of these remarks can never consent to engage.

In some journals, however, conducted in general with decorum and regard to the proprieties of social intercourse and private feeling, there seems to be an inclination quite manifest to put Mr. Webster's Andover Address below his former efforts of a similar nature, "in the palmy days of Whig exertions and Whig triumphs which preceded the election of General Harrison." No controversy with the writers of these criticisms is designed on the present occasion. But as they have taken the liberty freely to express their opinion, it may be lawful, in a "land of liberty," to express another opinion somewhat different from theirs. The ultimate appeal must of course be to that part of the public, who have both the power of forming a critical judgment and the candor which is necessary to form it correctly. To them the writer of the following remarks will most cheerfully submit.

It may not be improper to state here, that the writer in the present case has no connection whatever, either with the public journals, or with any canvassing for political office. He never sought or held any office whatever, of a political nature, which it was in the power of the government or of the people to bestow. He never expects to seek or receive one. At all events, then, his remarks are not prompted by the hopes of promotion, or of the emoluments which flow from it. And as to the journals which, when embarked in any particular course, are reluctant to swerve from it, the present writer has no other interest in them than what their value excites, and no particular favoritism toward the course which any one of them pursues. Some of them he regards as entitled to his sincere approbation.

Having thus declared who he is not, he may, without farther preface, proceed to make some remarks, premising only that he shall, for convenience sake, and to avoid formality, employ the *first* person instead of the *third*, in the remainder of his communication.

It was my lot, as I have already hinted, to be present at the great meeting in Andover. And a *great* one it truly was. Notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, I mean the severe cold which sank the thermometer nearly to freezing point at mid-day, the yeomanry

from the neighborhood poured in to listen to the Address. There were, moreover, nearly a thousand persons from Boston and Salem, of whom were many leading characters among the Whigs. But notwithstanding the coldness of the weather, there were some propitious circumstances attending the day. The sun shone brightly, and the air was serene; and this state of things continued until the exercises were nearly through.

The procession that was formed, the splendid escort by the New England Guards, of Boston, the magnificent brass band led by Kendall, the throng of joyous and applauding spectators of both sexes—these and the like things have all been so fully detailed in the journals, that nothing more need now be said respecting them. The place of assembling has been partially, but not fully, described. It is difficult indeed to do it justice. One must imagine a plat of ground, shaped like an immense bowl, the bottom of which is a large flat, and the sides of which rise very gradually and with a gentle slope to the height of some 50 or 60 feet. This area would contain within itself at least fourteen or fifteen thousand persons, all of whom could be brought perfectly within the sound of a well toned voice. On one side of this peculiar amphitheatre, if we may so call it, a stage was erected capable of holding some seventy or eighty persons, furnished with two long tables for reporters, which were entirely occupied. This latter class of gentlemen, as I was told, were from Boston, New York, Albany, Lowell, and some other parts of Massachusetts not named. The position of the stage was peculiar. It was placed about one third of the way up the ascent of the amphitheatre, on the northwest side of it; and back of it was a thick forest of evergreens on the ascending ground, which contributed greatly to the quiet of the place, and formed a rampart against the north wind and the cold. There was, moreover, to a sensitive mind, something of awe in this dense overshadowing forest. It extended itself, however, only from the northwest to the northeast side of the area in question. Never was a place better adapted to public speaking. I cannot doubt, in the least, that any man, who is able to use his voice with skill and power, might make at least 15,000 persons in this place hear every word which he would utter.

So much for the procession and the place. A few words, now, as to the distinguished speaker, who was to address the great assembly convened on this occasion.

He came to Andover on the day preceding the Address. The friends who visited him in the evening found him laboring under a most violent catarrhal complaint, which arose from a preceding snow storm, followed by a very damp and cold atmosphere. Mr. W. himself, and his friends also, nearly despaired of his being able to address the meeting on the following day. A peaceful night, however, in a good degree restored his usual tone of health, and the next morning he found himself, as he said, "not unwilling to say a few commonplace and dull things to his friends, if they wished him to make the effort."

The procession was long in forming, on account of the distance from which great numbers had to come. It was mid-day before they reached the ground where the Address was to be made. Mr. W., on account of the somewhat delicate state of his health, at this time, waited at the house of a friend until the procession had begun their march. He met them at a moderate distance from the station. A friend, who was near him at the time when his eye first caught a glance of the long and deep array of freemen in the procession, said to him: "You thought that you were to address only a small gathering of people from this and the neighboring towns; look back and see how many guests are come to the feast to-day." He cast back his eye; but the end of the procession could not be seen, it being hidden by a rising ground, at the distance of nearly one-third of a mile. On the way to the speaking station, when Mr. W. had mounted the rising ground which surrounds the amphitheatre, he could now look back and see, at last, the whole of the procession. It was some eight or ten deep, and extended to almost half a mile. Besides these were a large number of persons already assembled on the ground, and these were afterward joined by many new comers. The whole number has been variously estimated in the journals; much, I should think, at least by many of them, according to the tenor of their wishes, rather than of their judgment. I have seen many large assemblies in the course of my life, and I venture, after some pains-taking, to form a judgment, and after conferring with others accustomed to form one on such occasions, to say that there could not be less than between five and six thousand people. I have heard and read of their being 1,500, 1,800, 2,000, 2,500, 3,000, etc..; all the result of inexperience in judging, or of displeasure at the occasion.

When Mr. W. first cast a glance at this immense train, this solid phalanx of the freemen of Old Essex and her friends, his eye kindled, and his face glowed with an emotion that was indicative of good to come for those who were to hear him. A friend who was near him thought he saw the tear of emotion start in his eye; he was sure it did in his own. When Mr. W. had reached the position spoken of above, namely, the elevated side of the amphitheatre, and could by looking back see the whole of the procession, moving along with a gravity, a stillness, and a sobriety of demeanor which could scarcely be surpassed by a great

assembly convening for public worship, that friend said to Mr. Webster: Look back now, and see how it will fare with the "common-place and dull things that you threatened us with saying." The look evidently brought up his whole soul into his countenance. On noticing this, that friend added, "Now then I am certain that something will be done to-day. I am sure this will bring out some of the very recesses of your intellectual interior." Mr. W. made no answer; but it was easy to believe that the prediction of that friend, would be verified. Mr. W. however, after a few moments, merely expressed his gratification, in delicate terms, at the stillness, the perfect order, the deep earnestness, of those who were to be his auditors.

The station was reached in a few minutes, and the exercises commenced after a short delay. I shall spend no time in repeating details already given in the public journals. I aim more at the *interior* history of the occasion, than its exterior. There was, from the moment the attention of this great meeting was formally invited, the most solemn and profound stillness, through the whole of the exercises, with the exception of occasional applauses. It was an affecting sight, when it was announced that the blessing of Heaven was to be invoked, to see such a vast assemblage uncover their heads, without an exception, and stand in a posture of reverence that could not be exceeded in any church, on the most solemn occasion. There was not a whisper or a movement. With the arch of heaven for the dome of their temple, with the glorious noonday sun in all his radiance looking down upon them, and surrounded by the dark ever-green forest, and the high rampart of hills thrown up by the hand of Omnipotence, this mighty mass of the yeomanry of Essex, unsurpassed in true dignity and worth of character by any other like assembly on the face of the earth, bowed and worshipped with an awe that cannot be adequately described, before the God of the whole earth, in whose hands are the destinies of rulers and people, and before whom all nations are as nothing and vanity, and are counted as the dust of the balance.

The various exercises which followed have already been described in the papers. Justice, however, has not, as it seems to me, been done to the Hon. Mr. Phillips, of Salem, for his preamble and resolutions. They were the fruit of much research, and told some important truths in respect to the structure and design of our State Government, which the community seem of late to have lost sight of.

But I hasten to the chief speaker. He began in a moderate tone, as he always does in his great speeches. He gradually warmed and rose as the occasion, the matter of his discourse, and the feelings of the assembly before him demanded. In this he showed his usual tact. Nothing can be more incongruous than a highly animated and glowing address from a speaker, to an assembly which is perfectly cool and grave; specially when they have come together, not to pour out their pent-up or indignant feelings on any moving occasion, but to be instructed, and thus to be persuaded to perform their duty. It is altogether incongruous when a speaker rises, in presence of a great assembly, and is all on fire and bursting with zeal, while his audience do not yet know what there is to set him on fire, and see no reason why they should burn with him. Mr. W. makes no such mistakes.

Such a listening concourse I have never seen, on a merely civil or social occasion. In particular, from the moment when Mr. W. began, until he closed, there was nothing but the most fixed and eager attention among his audience. Indeed, it made one's heart beat high, to look on that vast and solemn assembly, as they stood before the speaker. There was a sea of upturned faces; a sea unruffled except by the mighty impetus of the speaker in occasional passages. But when this ocean of human aspects was agitated, (and this was on no light occasion,) it resounded like the mighty deep that lifts its voice on high, amid the buffetings of the storm. It was the shout of freemen, firmly resolved to defend their precious rights and their invaluable privileges to the latest breath; a shout which made the hills to echo and re-echo its lofty note, and which mounted to the arch of heaven above. It was the response of thousands, to whom the principles of civil and religious liberty and of eternal right and justice are very dear, and who could not but exult, when they heard them lucidly explained and nobly defended.

There was one circumstance, in particular, which imparted peculiar interest to the scene. Every person present knew that the approbation, whenever and however expressed, was the unbought and unsolicited approbation of men who judged for themselves. There were no clap-traps provided for the occasion: no hirelings stationed here and there to give the watch word to a mob, to throw up their caps into the air, and strain their lungs to the highest pitch in hallooing. Whenever hurraing or clapping of hands took place, it proceeded from no one particular quarter first, and then merely spread itself gradually out, but it was simultaneous, and thus showed that it resulted from the homogeneous and universal feeling of the audience. It is true that the tokens of applause in question were less frequent than usually take place in most *city* meetings. But there was good reason for this. The simple yeomanry of the country are not trained, and are not accustomed, to noise and adulation, and they were the

mass of the audience; while the friends present from the cities in the neighborhood, were almost without exception of a class who think little of huzzas, and care still less to have their friends overloaded with them. Besides all this, the audience were too intent upon drinking in instruction, often to interrupt the flow of it. They showed more interest in their faces and in their demeanor, than could be shown by all the shouts or the clapping that could have been exhibited. It was a kind of testimony which no man could fail to read, none could mistake. And when the bursts of applause did come, it was, as has been intimated, mere spontaneous feeling that occasioned them. There was no plan on the part of the speaker to call them out, and none on the part of any of his hearers to regulate their number.

The speaker said nothing but what his subjects demanded, nor in any way which was not entirely consistent with pure rhetorical taste. It is impossible but that the unalterable fixedness of look upon him, which continued down to the last word that he uttered, must have given him greater satisfaction than any clapping of hands or hurrahs. I do not say that these should be altogether suppressed in meetings of such a nature as the one in question; they may have their uses when soberly and judiciously employed; but as they are more generally managed of late years, any man of real weight and dignity of character must look upon them with emotions bordering upon contempt.

If any one will turn to the report of Mr. W.'s speech as printed in the Commercial, which I believe is the only full and complete one in all its parts, he may see that the audience of Mr. W. seldom missed in their judgment, where applause was manifested. One case of particular delicacy of feeling I noticed, which is worth recording. The day, as I have said, though clear, was severely cold for the season. Mr. W. had taken off both his surtout and hat, when he prepared to make his address. Being admonished by some friend near him, as I believe, that it was dangerous to speak so long with his head uncovered, he after some time resumed his hat, with a simple parenthetic sentence in the way of apology. In an instant there was a wide and universal, although not boisterous, testimony of approbation from his audience, telling him at once, and fully, that in these circumstances it argued no want of respect to them that he addressed them with his head covered.

There are passages in his Address, where one might be strongly tempted to testify aloud his approbation, but which passed without such a mode of approval. I noticed it at the time. But nothing was easier than to account for it. The simple truth is, that the assembly was too deeply interested in what was said, and too intent upon what they expected would be said, to interfere often with the current of the discourse, or interrupt their own fixed attention. And well did they judge, in my humble opinion Any man of sense would rather be heard with respectful attention and silence, than to hear either clapping or hurrahs. The great agitator of Ireland, as I observe, not only has regular hurrahs at the end of paragraphs and sentences, but often at the end of single clauses, and sometimes of single words. If his reported speeches are true copies, it seems to make very little difference what is said, or how it is said; for at certain places his audiences must stop and hurrah, until they get out of breath and cool down their burning patriotism a little, and then they let their "deliverer" go on. Not so a New England audience; and above all, not so with Daniel Webster as speaker before them.

Enough of this. But I must add that when, at the close of his discourse, Mr. W. came to speak of himself, and the *official* course which he had pursued, there was such a thunder of applause, so often repeated and so long continued, as left no possibility of misapprehending the feelings of the audience. One was tempted to think that they had lost their sobriety, were it not that they immediately relapsed into their former frame, as soon as the exercises were closed; for they marched to the place of refreshment with the same order and quietness as they had come to the station.

There was some excellent speaking at the dinner table; in particular Mr. King, the Representative elect to Congress from the South Essex district, addressed the large concourse there, with great animation; General Dearborn, also, who was displaced last winter from his office, because he had lent some state arms to the conservatives of Rhode Island, made a very eloquent speech on the subject of lending these arms, and of their subsequent sale by order of the last winter's Legislature. But the severity of the cold forced me from the place, just before he concluded.

On review of this whole occasion, I count it one of those periods of a man's life which cannot often recur, but which leave behind them deep and lasting impressions. Every thing was sober, grave and decorous; unless, indeed, some one should say that the occasional play of wit in some of the toasts, and the speeches after them, might infringe upon this. But on such an occasion there is doubtless some latitude to be given to the play of the imagination and the fancy, in order to enliven an audience that had been fixed, so long as this had been, by most earnest and devoted attention. More than two hours, or rather nearly three, including all the previous exercises, had they been in this attitude. At all events, neither the toasts

nor the addresses that followed them were inspired by wine. The whole entertainment was conducted strictly upon temperance principles.

On the whole, the scene, the demeanor of the assembly, the peculiarity of the place, the character of the audience, the deep silver trumpet tone of the orator of the day, his gestures, his looks, his words—they made an impression never to be eradicated or forgotten.

I crave pardon for being so prolix on this part of my subject. I am only reiterating the language and the feelings of the thousands who were present.

But I have matters of more serious import in view; and I hasten to them without a word of preface.

A respectable Whig journal, in reporting only a part of Mr. W.'s speech, remarks, that "the speech has none of that fire, that vigor, that deep-toned, heart-born eloquence, which, in the glorious campaign of 1839–40, were wont to mark the efforts of Mr. W. in the furtherance of the good cause, and to stir all true Whig hearts like the sound of a trumpet." The writer goes on to speak of the "restraint" which manifests itself in the speech, as "contrasting with the frank, open and noble manner of former speeches on public matters."

This, or something like to this, has been said in a few other Whig journals; but, so far as I know, only in a few. I take the general impression to be that, take it all in all, the Andover address is one of the best and most useful and important of all Mr. W.'s speeches.

I can give some specific reasons for differing from the opinion of the journal above mentioned. It must certainly be admitted that different occasions call for addresses of different character. The perfection of any address consists, in its being wholly appropriate to the occasion which called it forth. Now what was the nature of the call in the present instance? The state election in Massachusetts was indeed pending, yet the committee who invited Mr. W. expressly say to him, that they do not invite him to address them for the purpose of aiding their town, district, or state election. They ask him to discuss topics of *universal* interest to the country—the topics in dispute between the two great parties that divide the nation. They ask him to discuss these, in such a way as will be adapted to arrest the attention of both parties, and cast light on the subject discussed, of which both may avail themselves. They did not think it would be courteous and respectful to Mr. W., situated as he now is, to invite him to come and prepare a mere *local* party banquet. He certainly would not have come for such a purpose. He could not do it without a degree of degradation.

How, then, has Mr. W. executed the task which he was invited to perform? There is but one answer to be made to this question. He has done just what the committee invited him to do. He has given his views on the most important topics which divide the opinions and feelings of the country, and given them in a manner that will not soon be forgotten. Is there one word in all that he has said, which is uttered *ad captandum*? Is there any invidious, sarcastic, vilifying remark in the whole speech, against such as differ from him in political opinion? Not one. Mr. W. is one of those men who believe that the minds of his fellow citizens are to be convinced and persuaded by argument and reason, and not by reproaches, and sarcasms, and hard names.

His political opponents may say what they please of his speech; but one may challenge them to produce from all their ranks, in the North or South, a single great speech on the topics in question, which has not more of party feeling and severity in it than the Andover Address. I am aware that some of the Whigs like it the less on this very account: but I am not aware that there is any good measure of candor, or magnanimity, or true policy, in such a feeling.

Nothing can be more unjust in criticism than to complain of Mr. W., that he had not all the excitement and fire of Harrison times, on the present occasion. First of all, we are not in the midst of Harrison times. We have fallen, alas! upon very different times. As Mr. W. was not invited to make any local or state elections his particular object, so there was none of the excitement that belongs to a heated political canvass to be expected from him, or demanded of him. It would have been aside from good taste for him to exhibit it. No general election for the whole country is yet fairly upon the *tapis*. It was not for Mr. W. to anticipate this. Nothing could be said, at this juncture, which was particular and personal, that would not have been misinterpreted and perverted. Mr. W. has been too long in public life to commit himself in this manner.

What was said long ago by a writer, whose short poem on the laws of criticism has been the best manual of rhetoric from the time when it was written down to the present hour, is still true. *Difficile est proprie communia dicere*, i. e. "it is difficult to speak in an interesting manner on topics with which every body is acquainted." No one is ignorant of the fact that, for the last seven or eight years, the topics on which Mr. W. spoke at Andover have been discussed, from the lofty senate chamber down to the bar-room caucus. Speakers in Congress have discussed and repeated, and repeated and discussed, until the whole matter has not only been worn thread-bare, but reduced to shreds. So has it been in all the state legis-

latures, caucuses, county meetings, town meetings, and tavern or other small meetings. Every newspaper, from the stately metropolitan down to the lowest radical off-shoot—the ten dollar papers and the cent-a-piece papers—have harped on the subjects that Mr. W. has canvassed, until they have become tiresome, even to the most violent sticklers for party measures. What hope was there for Mr. W., in such a case? The committee invited him to a task difficult indeed, and one which but few political men would be willing to undertake.

How then has he performed this task? Just as the committee hoped and expected; and just as the public, who knew him, expected. He has taken hold of the subjects with giant grasp. He has presented all that is essential and important, in the smallest compass possible, and in a manner so lucid that the most simple reader can understand him. He has brought the much controverted subjects, indeed, into so narrow a compass as to throw them all upon one canvass, sketched out there by his skilful hand. He has made for the country a manual of political economy—a text book which will go down to future generations, so far as the topics in question are concerned. No man can refute the substance of what he has said. Any one may rail at it, or he may scoff at it, if he is degraded and foolish enough to do so; but to refute his reasoning—the whole political world may be challenged to do it.

What propriety is there, then, in the criticism which complains that there is not the glow or warmth of Harrison speeches? Mr. W. was asked for *didactics;* he has given them with a witness. He has touched the common, trite, and absolutely worn-out topics with his magic wand, and they have started up before us in a new, simple, and beautiful costume. Every body who reads with candor wonders that such simple things could not be said before. It brings fresh to one's mind another admirable saying of that great master of the true principles of rhetoric, whose words I have quoted above, but whom I must again quote, because I can say nothing so appropriate as he has said:

> Ex noto fictum carmen sequar, ut sibi quivis
> Speret idem; sudet multum, frustraque laboret
> Ausus idem; tantum series juncturaque pollet.

That is: "One may compose a poem on a trite subject, in such a way that every body will feel himself able to accomplish the same thing; yet should they attempt it, after much severe effort, they will find that they have labored in vain: so much do nice arrangement and due connection of things avail." Never was this more completely verified than in the present instance. The simplicity which is so remarkable in Mr. W.'s discourse, is the genuine fruit of a master-mind, which first strongly and fully grasps a subject, then divests it of all that is extraneous, separates from it all that is unimportant, and lastly holds it up to view so that all its constituent parts will stand in the broad light of day.

It is always the work of a master mind to find the simple and constituent elements of things, that were to all appearance and to common minds intricate and perplexed. This is clearly one of the distinguishing prerogatives of Mr. W.'s mind.

Why now, I repeat the question, should any one say, in the way of undervaluing Mr. W.'s address, that it has not all the fire of Harrison times? If it had, I answer, it would have been inappropriate to the occasion. What if a critic on Cicero should now rise up and say: "The orations for the poet Archias and in defence of Milo are but tame and insipid performances; for they are destitute of that fire and energy which appear in his invectives against Cataline and Marc Antony?" Or what if one should say that "Demosthenes may justly be taxed with a failure, because his oration for Phormio, or against Spudias, is not to be compared, as to fire and energy, with his Oration for the Crown, or his Philippics?" One might surely, and with much propriety, reply, that different occasions call for different kinds of oratory. The highest evidence of the first order of oratorical talent is, that a speaker always says that which is appropriate to the occasion, and in the manner that the nature of the case requires.

It is beyond a doubt that Mr. W.'s eloquence is prevailingly of the Demosthenian order. He never seeks to make a display. He never steps aside to cull a gaudy flower for the sake of ornament. He will scarcely ever admit it even when proffered. He never strains his imagination in search of novel, and seemingly ornate, and striking forms of expression. He exhibits simplicity without homeliness, neatness without affectation, strength without roughness. There is a living power in the tenor of his thoughts, which, while its pulse beats deep and high, communicates the energy of its movements to all within its reach. Mr. W.'s power lies mainly, as every discriminating hearer or reader must perceive, in his deep, logical, orderly, simple, and energetic vein of thought; indeed his is truly the eloquence of thought. Yet not in such a sense as if words, or the choice of words, were a matter of indifference to him. Nothing can be further from reality than this; for his diction is altogether congruous with his course of thought, and seems to come forth as easily and naturally as water flows along a descent. Often, in the course of his address, was I reminded of the

remark of Milton—a remark equally discriminating and just—namely, that when a hearty lover of truth, anxious to communicate it to others, would speak, "his words, like so many nimble and airy servitors, trip about him at command, and in well ordered files, as he would wish, fall aptly into their own places." Even under the disadvantage of mere stenographic representation, the scrutiny of the critic will discover few cases indeed in Mr. W.'s discourses, where the diction could be altered for the better. And as to words coming *at the bidding* of Mr. W., never had a master more complete, absolute, and uncontrollable dominion, than this orator has over "his nimble and airy servitors."

It would be easy to refer to several of Mr. W.'s speeches, where he has shown that he can rival the manner of Cicero, as well as that of Demosthenes. It is undoubtedly true, that an imagination which kindles so easily as his, and a mind so instinct and fraught with poetic imagery and conception, could achieve any thing in the way of ornamented discourse which it might be desirable to achieve. But his chastened taste does not permit indulgence in this way, when he engages in forensic and didactic speaking.

His Bunker Hill Addresses show how easily he can depart from his more usual argumentative and didactic manner—delightful in their kind—Parian marble chiselled into Corinthian columns—while his argumentative discourses are of the solid granite, wrought in the chaste and severe simplicity and grandeur of the Ionic order. And what shall we say of the man who can erect a structure of either shape and material, with equal ease and skill? We have such a one in the Defender of the Constitution of our country.

It would be superfluous for me to recapitulate here the substance of Mr. Webster's Address. It is in every body's hands, and all can read and judge for themselves. But it may be proper merely to notice that the order of the topics which he has discussed, is that which the feelings of his audience and of the country made the most natural and apposite. First, the currency, as the means of trade and commerce, in which every man, rich and poor, is interested; then comes the great and intensely interesting subject of tariff, or, in other words, the subject of patronising and encouraging the manufactures of our country. How great this is, may be judged of in some measure by the products of 1840, a year far inferior as to the quantity of them to 1843. But of the last named year I have no estimate on which I can rely.

In 1840, however, the amount of our productions by manufacture was but a little short of TWO HUNDRED AND FORTY MILLIONS OF DOLLARS. The exact sum, as estimated in the best possible manner, was $239,836,224. If such a vast sum stands as the equivalent of our manufactured productions, what must be the amount of the capital embarked by the manufactures in buildings and machinery? It almost surpasses calculation. And yet it is altogether certain, that but for the tariff a large proportion of this capital would be entirely inactive and worthless. European labor—from four pence to a shilling a day—must enable the manufacturers there to undersell us here, until such time as our machinery, which is every year improving, and superseding more and more the need of numerous operatives, and the quantity and quality of our raw material, shall become so complete, that we can not only sell as cheap as Europe, but even undersell them, and go to foreign markets with our productions. Already has the process commenced; and let the tariff be on ten years longer, and it will extend to nearly all the most important articles produced by our manufacturers.

But my present business is not to argue the point. Mr. W. has rendered it needless. I merely advert to the happy dexterity with which Mr. W. has interwoven documents with his speech, which show that tariff is no novelty under our Government. The opinions and views of Dr. Franklin, and of the leading men in Boston, so far back as 1787, are fully given. *Mutatis mutandis*, the very same things could be now said, and with still greater power. In fact Mr. W. has so said them.

The subjects of the public lands and of repudiation remain. The first topic is briefly handled, as, on this occasion, was absolutely necessary. In respect to the second, Mr. W. has brought forward a most admirable address of Congress to the States, immediately after the peace in 1783, on the subject of paying their debts. He believes, and has expressed himself in strong and undoubting terms, that our public faith and credit will be yet redeemed. At all events, we shall surely become a hissing and by-word among all nations if they be not.

I have seen several gentlemen, lately returned from the continent of Europe and from England. Nothing seems to be talked of there, now, in respect to America, but repudiation, and Lynch-law, and slavery. This is the sombre tri-colored flag that floats, in their view, over all our country. Time was, when Americans, all over the continent of Europe, were received with open arms, and with more cordiality than the men of any other nation. But now an American is pointed at with the finger of scorn, as he passes along the streets, and he may deem himself lucky if the mob do not hoot at and pursue him. Such are the tremendous retributions of dishonesty, of violated public faith, of outraged law and justice, and of an avarice and a selfishness which stop at no bounds marked out by heaven or earth.

I is high time that this state of things should be changed. A general conviction of the

truth of Mr. W.'s positions would change the whole in three months, and cleanse and redeem our deeply stained character. The importance of the topics, then, which he has discussed, no one will call in question.

It remains to notice the concluding paragraphs of the Andover address, and then I have done. But these involve so many circumstances of interest, and are of so much importance to the country, as well as to Mr. Webster individually, that I shall not venture even to touch upon them in the present communication. I must reserve them for another apportunity; and should that present itself, I believe I may venture to say that I have some communications to make, which will more than atone for the prolixity of the preceding remarks. I have *facts* to state, respecting what Mr. Webster has accomplished for the country, during and before the time when he took office in the Cabinet, some of which are but partially, if at all, known to the country. A correct knowledge of these must, as it seems to me, in some respects have an important influence on the present state of public opinion. I shall, however, if I find it possible, occupy less room than I have now done; and I hope, at all events, to excite a higher interest in the reader's mind, than I can reasonbly suppose myself to have excited by the preceding communication.

CIVIS.

NUMBER II.

The sketch which I am about to make of our political affairs, and of Mr. Webster's connection with them, during and since 1838, must necessarily be brief and rapid. It would amount to a little volume, should I go minutely into the detail.

The perpetually occurring and harrassing difficulties on the frontiers of Maine, during the year 1838, are fresh in the recollection of all. We were not only in danger of a bitter and bloody war, but one might actually say that a beginning had been made. The question had been long, and, as it was thought, ably discussed between England and our government, as to the right of the case; and both parties believed themselves to be in possession of that right. That England, as well as we, was sincere in this belief, there is no good room for rational doubt.

In the session of Congress of 1838-9, Mr. W. made his great speech in favor of the claims of Maine and Massachusetts to the disputed territory. This diffused general conviction over the United States; but Great Britain was not yet satisfied. Matters were evidently hastening to a fearful crisis; and, in view of this, the great majority in Congress were in favor of a special mission to England. Massachusetts and Maine, without much distinction of party, wished most earnestly that Mr. W. should be nominated by Mr. Van Buren to go on this mission. There would have been a general, if not a universal, approbation of such a measure.

From a variety of reasons, some of which will present themselves to every discerning reader, Mr. Van Buren declined to make the nomination. Instead of following the advice of Congress, as plainly manifested by the vote of both houses, in making the necessary appropriation, Mr. Van Buren directed Mr. Stevenson to consult England on the subject; and, as was to be expected, England, that is to say Lord Palmerston, saw no use in a special mission. So the matter remained in the hands of the two officials, Lord Palmerston and Mr. Stevenson.

The result is known to every body. These negotiators left off where they began. The country was on the very eve of a war, and was only waiting for a first blow to be struck.

In this state of things, Mr. W.'s friends thought that he ought to go to England as a private individual, if not as a special Minister. Moved by their advice, and not without hopes, perhaps, that something might be done for the welfare of his country, he did go in May of 1839. When he arrived in London, Parliament was in session, and the whole world, as Englishmen say, was in London. At this period, and in order to prevent any diversity of feeling with respect to the approaching presidential election, Mr. W., in a letter to a respected friend in New York, made known that he declined any nomination as a candidate for the office of the chief magistracy.

Finding all the influential and leading circles of the English nation in London, Mr. W. had of course ready access to them, and was able to converse at large with them on the difficulties that existed between the two nations. Being a private man, all conversed with him freely, and he found almost every where a ready and listening ear. He stayed through most of the summer, until the Parliament broke up, in the city of London. Here he saw men of both houses of Parliament, and of all classes, from the highest down to the humblest station. His effort was, as opportunity offered, to enlighten their minds as to the true state

of the great and controverted question, and as to the real and paramount interests of both countries. Light would, as he very reasonably believed, produce conviction that peace was exceedingly desirable to both.

He found such to be the case. And what is somewhat remarkable and quite different from what most persons in this country would suspect, he found that the *Conservative* part of Parliament, and of the English in general, were much more open to conviction, and easy of access in respect to the pending questions, than the Whig party. He found them far more ready to fall in with suggestions, which appealed to good feeling and magnanimity.

Among others specially deserving notice here, Mr. W. visited, and had long conversations with, Lord Ashburton, afterward special ambassador to this country. He was invited, also, to a conference at his office, by the Marquis of Normanby, then Secretary of State.

Of the impression made on the minds of the English by Mr. W. I need not say much. His countrymen know too well to need information, that Mr. W. could, and did, easily satisfy the leading men in England that he was "not a whit behind the very chiefest" of them. A saying of Lord Brougham, characteristic of himself as well as of Mr. W., is current in England, and partially here, viz: That "he (Mr. W.) was a steam-engine in breeches." I mention this, not for the sake of flattery, but only to show the impression made upon men of the highest circle in England, by the conversation of Mr. Webster.

But Mr. W's. intercouse with public men was not confined to London. When Parliament broke up, he visited the nobility, some of the bishops, and many gentlemen in the country. His visit to the Archbishop of York, as I have heard him mention it, deserves particular notice, as indicating how little even the best informed Englishmen knew about some important particulars involved in the disputed questions. Mr. W. found him a venerable old man, of more than 80 years, above the stature of most men, erect as in youth, and a deeply interested politician, while all his mental powers were in full and vigorous exercise. The Archbishop expressed his feelings with some warmth, against the neglect of the American Government in respect to preventing the outbreaks continually occurring on the frontiers. He said it was our imperious duty to establish a cordon of troops, in order to watch over them and restrain them. And how long does your Grace think this cordon must be? said Mr. Webster. Oh, it must extend some distance, he replied, but not a very great one; although I have not particularly examined. I will tell you, then, said Mr. W.; the distance is as great as from your palace to Constantinople, and thence back again to Vienna. The Archbishop lifted up both hands in astonishment. Mr. W. assured him that taking Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York into the calculation, (and they should be taken into it,) what he had said was literally true. It was easy for his Grace to see that a cordon of troops along the whole of such a frontier was out of all question, and even if it were established, it would prove to be nugatory.

Suffice it to say that Mr. W. spent four or five months in London and other parts of England, among people of all classes. Late in the autumn of 1839, he returned to this country. It became soon apparent that Harrison was fast gaining ground, and Mr. W. embarked in canvassing for him with all his might. In the mean time he was advertised by friends in England, that the hopes of the leading men there, of bringing about a peace, were greatly increased by the prospect of General Harrison's election. They had tried the Van Buren administration, and done all that they had felt able to do, and had brought about nothing. The question with that administration was, as they supposed, how will English matters bear on our re-election; not what would contribute most for the peace, the happiness, and the interests of the two nations. From Gen. Harrison and the Cabinet which he would select, they had strong hopes of measures that would lead to pacification.

In November of 1840, Gen. Harrison's election was secured. From him Mr. W. received an immediate offer of any place in the Cabinet which he would choose, as is known from his own statement. He chose, of course, in view of what he had seen in England, and with the hope of completing what may be said to have begun, the office of *Secretary of State.*

Mr. W. was sworn into office immediately after Harrison's inauguration. In the meantime a most unfortunate event had occurred, which threatened to defeat all Mr. W.'s past efforts and frustrate his hopes. This was the arrest of McLeod, in February of 1841, just before the new administration came into office. He was thrown into prison for a capital offence; and the magistrate who had at first bailed him, was forced by the mob to retract the bail and thrust him into close confinement. What was more unfortunate still, the Governor of New York claimed him as a New York state prisoner, and insisted on his being tried by the court of that state. And all this, it will be remembered, when McLeod was in reality charged with doing nothing more than obeying the command of his superior officer. It would be hard to say that the Governor of that state did this for popular effect; but it is equally difficult to suppose that such a lawyer, and civilian, and jurist, as he confessedly is, could be ignorant of a principle so plain, as that an inferior officer is bound, on penalty of

death, to obey his superior; that the superior alone is responsible for the acts which that inferior does; or, in case he merely obeys his Government, that the Government is responsible to the nation injured by those acts.

In fact this principle was so plain, so obvious, so universally acknowledged, that all England, without exception, was lighted up into a blaze as soon as the news of McLeod's imprisonment reached it. Three days after Mr. Webster was sworn into office, he received a communication from Mr. Fox, the English Minister, informing him that unless McLeod was liberated, a rupture between the two countries was inevitable.

In this fearful state of affairs, Mr. W. sat down and wrote his celebrated letter to the English Ministry on the subject of McLeod's imprisonment and impending trial. His design was to show, that while he fully recognized the correctness of the principle maintained by England, it was impossible, from the nature of our State and General Governments, for the latter to interfere where a *process of law* was commenced in the former. On this letter every thing depended. Had not Mr. W. succeeded in satisfying the English Ministry that the United States, as such, had done and would do all that was possible in the case, for rendering justice to McLeod as an individual, a war forthwith was the inevitable consequence. It is not perhaps generally known, but is a fact, that Mr. Fox had received positive orders, that unless McLeod was shortly set at liberty, he should demand his passports, and leave the country. But this was not all. Whenever it came to this, he was commissioned to advertise the Governor of the Canadas and the admirals on the Halifax and West India stations, that active aggressions, such as a state of war demanded, were to be forthwith made by each of them, with all the vigor and alacrity that were possible.

Mr. W.'s letter brought the English Ministry and people to a stand. They saw, at once, that they could not reasonably demand of our General Government to violate state privileges and institutions. They saw that the General Government had done, and was willing to do, all that was possible and lawful. This calmed the raging elements. And they truly needed to be calmed, for all the people of England, from the sovereign on the throne to the beggar on the dunghill, were not only of one opinion in this matter, but of one heart and soul as to making war on us, should it become necessary by any punishment of McLeod.

So much for this masterpiece of argument on the part of Mr. Webster—one of the greatest services ever done to the country, and which no man in it could probably have done as well as he—and thus much for the state of things which followed the publication of that letter.

In the meantime, at Mr. W.'s suggestion, the President had nominated Mr. Everett to the place of ambassador in England, in the month of May, 1841. Congress, it will be remembered, sat through the summer of that year into September. Mr. E., on account of difficulties made by some of the Southern gentlemen, was not confirmed until late in the summer session. In the interim, before letters could reach him, Mr. Everett had gone to Rome.

He did not reach England until December of 1841. Mr. Webster did not expect that any thing definite and final would or could be done, until McLeod's trial was through, and Mr. E. had taken his place at the British Court.

Shortly after Mr. E.'s arrival, he wrote to Mr. Webster, and informed him that the British Ministry were pacifically inclined. It should be recalled here, that in May of this year, (1841) the Melbourne Ministry had gone out, and that of the *Conservatives* had been established. All this seemed auspicious for our country. It proved to be so. Mr. E. found that Lord Aberdeen, the new Secretary of State, had determined to nominate *Lord Ashburton* for the American Mission, and for the very reason, that he found him favorably inclined to America, and also believed, as he had reason to do, that Lord A. would be very acceptable there. This was just what Mr. W. had all along expected. Lord A. would not have consented to go on such a mission, had he not been pursuaded, from the conferences which he had already held with Mr. W., that he and the latter gentleman might bring about a pacification. This too was Mr. Webster's confident hope and expectation. And it was this which was the main inducement to hold his place in the Cabinet, when the other members of it resigned.

The unpleasant and disastrous occurrence of resignation took place in September, 1841, just before the close of the long session of Congress. A minute discussion of it, in this place, would not be congruous with my design, or important to it. Disastrous to the country it certainly was, to lose such men from the Cabinet. Yet I never have seen any good reason seriously to blame the resigning members. How was it possible, after such a dereliction of honor as was manifest from employing them, and Mr. Sergeant and Mr. Berrien, to make peace between the President and an offended and abused Legislature, and then disregarding and nullifying by a *veto* the very terms of pacification which he had assented to or prescribed—how was it possible that they should not take umbrage at the acts of the Executive?

No wonder that Mr. Sergeant resigned his place. No wonder that such men as Messrs. Crittenden and Ewing, and Bell, and Badger, and Granger, resigned their places. At least

it is no wonder to me; for down to this very hour, I have never been able to look on their course with any other feeling than that of decided approbation.

But I shall be asked how I can speak and feel thus, and yet be satisfied with Mr. W. for *remaining* in the Cabinet. Without any difficulty, I answer; and if I have not given reasons enough already to justify him, the sequel, as I think, will supply any deficiency.

First of all, then, when the rupture had taken place, and it was plain that the Whig party were irreconcilable toward the President, Mr. W. consulted the Massachusetts delegation, as to the course which they would advise him to pursue. With two exceptions, and these were gentlemen of high standing and character, they were all agreed that Mr. W. ought to stay in the Cabinet. The two gentlemen in question at first doubted; afterward they gave an opinion *against* remaining. Among those who advised Mr. W. to remain was the venerable John Q. Adams. Mr. Clay was also consulted, through the medium of a friend. He gave his opinion, that Mr. W. ought to remain until a treaty with England could be made; and after this, he thought Mr. W. should retire. A good reason why he did not follow both parts of this advice will, as I think, be given in the sequel. If Mr. W. judged wrongly, then, on this occasion, he did it in common with some of the wisest, the most experienced, and most judicious men of this country.

In the next place, as Mr. W. states in his letter of Sept. 13, 1841, to Messrs. Gales & Seaton, the editors of the National Intelligencer, there had been no disagreement as to the business of his Department, between the President and himself. There was every prospect of being able to adjust the differences with England, because Mr. Everett was now confirmed, and there was a change in the English Ministry. Mr. W. had no serious doubts, he could have none after all that he had heard and seen and said in England, that if Lord Ashburton should be nominated on a special embassy to America, the desired object could be accomplished. Is there a man in all the country, who will now say that it was *not* best for Mr. W. to remain longer in the Cabinet? I do indeed believe that few if any such can be found.

But there are some particulars, in regard to this matter, that need farther discussion. The letter of Mr. W. to which I have just referred contains two reasons for remaining in the Cabinet; perhaps I may say *three*, although Mr. W. has reckoned them otherwise. The first is the harmony of opinion between him and the President, as to our foreign relations. The second is, that he has confidence that the President will yet co-operate with the Legislature in some plan to aid the revenue and the financial operations. The third is, that in case of resignation, the President ought to have reasonable notice, so that he might have time to select others to fill the places vacated.

I have always regretted, and do still regret, that this last reason was given. In itself, and applied to any ordinary case, it contains a truth to which all may readily subscribe. But in this case, after having confidentially employed his Cabinet to allay the storm which his *veto* had raised, and acceded to or proposed means of conciliation, what could he expect from men of high and honorable feelings, except that they would resign forthwith, in case he again put his veto on the very measures agreed upon? I have never thought, and never can believe, as I have already said, that the Cabinet did wrong in resigning forthwith. But still I believe it would have been much better for the country, if they had patiently borne it all, and kept their places until they were forced from them. In this last case the outrage would have been such that no disunion or disagreement among the Whig party would ever have taken place.

Mr. W. undoubtedly foresaw this; indeed he adverts to the absolute necessity of *continued agreement* among the Whigs, in the letter just mentioned. The misfortune of the case was, that in this same letter he has spoken of "reasonable notice" in such a way that the implication seems to be, that in his judgment his colleagues had not dealt reasonably with the President, and so that there was reason to impute blame to them.

In such a state of exasperated feeling, now, as existed at that period, it was impossible not to apprehend that such a construction would be put upon Mr. Webster's letter—impossible, I mean, for a bystander, who was cool and personally unconcerned, and had time to cast about him as to probable consequences. The sequel showed that there was good reason to apprehend such consequences. Mr. W. himself was soon aware of them in their full extent. But he supposed that the letter in question might be interpreted by another addressed to H. Ketchum, Esq., of New York, and dated two days earlier, which is fuller, and, on some points, more explicit. In that he speaks, and no doubt with great sincerity, of the deep regret which the resignation of his colleagues had occasioned him. He also adverts, in the letter to Mr. K., to the agreement between himself and the President in regard to our foreign relations; to the necessity of continued union among the Whig party, and to the probability of still agreeing on some measures of importance in respect to the finances. One other idea is also distinctly brought to view, one which weighed much in his mind, and doubtless contributed not a little toward the decision which he had made to remain in the Cabinet, viz: that "he had not been able to see in what manner the resignation of the Cabinet was likely either to remove or mitigate the evils in question." For this opinion he had substantial reason

inasmuch as nothing can be more certain than that the resignation of the Cabinet aggravated all the evils pressing upon us.

But the apprehension of this, at that time, could come only from a kind of cool and deliberate foresight; and of itself, moreover, it would not of course outweigh all the reasons which the other Cabinet members might have for resigning. Patience, long suffering, perhaps some might say lofty magnanimity, might have induced the resigning members to view the subject in the same light. But there was a high and chivalrous feeling among them, which I must ever admire and applaud, despite of all prudential reasoning. The majority of the Whigs, at that time, went along with it. It is not strange, therefore, that they had some feeling, and in many cases strong feeling, on account of Mr. W.'s implied censure of the course of the resigning members of the Cabinet. I say *implied*, for there is not any thing in his letters which contains an attack upon his colleagues, although they have been so construed. Still the very fact that he did not resign seems to imply that he regarded their course as wrong. Yet even this position must be modified. He did think that they, on the whole, had judged erroneously, and therefore he could not partake in the movement. Nor can there now be a shadow of doubt that their resignation divided the Whig party. If they had remained, the President, to get rid of them, must have forced them from their places, and then he would not have had a Whig partizan left in the whole country; and our matters would have been in a very different state from that in which they now are. Mr. W. was politically and prudentially right, looking at and judging from the consequences resulting from the act of his colleagues; they were justified only by the laws of chivalric honor, and by their disgust at the treachery which had been practiced upon them.

But it is of no avail to make calculations now. The thing has been done. Mr. W. has written the two letters in question, and remained for two years in the Cabinet. The consequences of his remaining are yet to be more fully unfolded in the sequel. But as yet the point before us has not been discussed in its full extent.

It is certainly a matter of regret to Mr. W.'s best friends, and probably to himself, that his two letters were, amidst the hurry of perplexing business and the pressure of momentous concerns, so written that they were the occasion of such an interpretation as was put upon them. It is not strange, that amid such pressures, and affected perhaps in some degree by the bitter remarks and suspicions of many warm Whigs—bitter remarks, because he still retained his place, and suspicions, moreover, that he was about to quit the ranks of the Whigs—it is not strange, I say, that Mr. W. wrote as he did. He could not consent to act against his own judgment in the matter, merely to gratify party wishes. He felt, too, that his independence of character and opinion had been infringed upon, by the constructions put upon his conduct. He thought it was enough to give what he deemed valid reasons for holding his place, without naming all the reasons which he had, and which operated most of all in bringing him to the decision which he had made. If he misjudged in this case—and I am inclined to believe that he did—it was not from any of the motives which have been attributed to him by some of the exasperated Whig presses. I have said, and say again, he was right in a civil and prudential point of view; he was right as a wary statesman and a calculator of foresight. But he overlooked too much the state of feeling that was then predominant, and was not careful enough to steer clear of all the unlucky interpretations that might be put upon his two letters.

Mr. W., if he can bear with this judgment as to his course—and I apprehend he has magnanimity enough to do so—may still feel that while the writer of these remarks can never do otherwise than admire the noble and chivalrous feelings of his colleagues, and avow that in his view they are worthy of all honor, this same writer is entirely satisfied that he did right, nay, that with the exception of the mere *shape* given to his two letters, he acted with a magnanimity and forbearance which have few precedents and no superiors in our political history.

If the reader is surprised at this avowal, after all that I have said, I must remind him in this place of the condition in which Mr. W. was placed. The story of his efforts in England, and the account of his confident and as the sequel shows well grounded expectations in regard to the English embassy, and the temper of the British Cabinet, exhibited, after all, the fundamental reason of Mr. W.'s continuance in office. But how could he assign the true reasons, and all of them, to the public at this period? How could he come forward at a time when there was so strong an inclination to blame him, or suspect him; or indeed how could he come forward even at any time; and say that he had, by his personal efforts and influence in England, prepared the way for a treaty with that country on honorable grounds? To recount his own labors, or even to advert to them, would have been called boasting, and assuming to himself an importance greater than that of any other man in the country. Mr. W. is among the last of men voluntarily to subject himself to such an imputation as this. Come what might, he could not and would not avow any such feelings. He did not even tell the President himself the story that in all good faith and truth he might have told. And

what man is there in all the country, who will not approve of the modesty and the magnanimity which such a course displayed?

It was, beyond all question, one of the sorest misfortunes at this period, in respect to Mr. W., that he was bound to *keep silence* as to the very things which most of all influenced him in the course that he pursued. He gave other reasons, and not bad ones, whether they are prudentially or civilly considered. But those reasons were misinterpreted, and did not satisfy. What then must he or could he do? Should he leave the Cabinet, at all events, in order to maintain his place in the Whig ranks? He asked this question of himself and of others, many times. He looked at it on every side. He came at last, (and who will not rejoice that he did?) to the conclusion that the peace and welfare of his country, which he now felt quite assured might be made secure, had higher demands on him than any party whatever. He could not tell the world the main reasons why he believed so, without subjecting himself to the imputation of assumption and vanity. It was out of the question to do this. It were better to suffer, and even to lose caste, than to let two countries engage in a war, that would cost many millions of treasure and shed rivers of blood; and which, after all, would end just where it began. He decided to remain. The sequel has shown that he was entirely correct in the expectations which he had formed. What more is needed for complete justification, in respect to his decision?

The public may rest assured that this account of the matter in question may be relied upon. It is no conjecture of political speculation or of partizan feeling in favor of Mr. Webster. The writer of these remarks was once among those who doubted whether Mr. Webster had decided right, when he remained in the Cabinet. He does not feel that he can any longer doubt. He hopes and trusts that others may come to sympathise with him.

And now what shall candor say to the course of this distinguished statesman in this whole matter? Mr. W. decided to remain in the Cabinet, at the hazard of losing many, perhaps most, of his best friends; of losing his place as a leader in the Whig party; of sacrificing, in all probability, the confidence and affection of the Whigs in respect to any place of importance which they might otherwise be disposed to assign him; in a word, at the hazard of his political character, influence, and consideration. He decided with all this hazard distinctly in view. He decided, most of all, for reasons which he could, neither then nor now, give to the public, with his own voice or pen. His country was most distinctly before his mind, and upon it—his country about to plunge into a bitter and bloody war, the end of which no human foresight could discern—and his country carried the day. He magnanimously determined to bear all that was said, or could be said, so long as his motives were not half understood and could not be explained, rather than give up the hope of serving his country. And truly, if ever a statesman was placed in a condition of tremendous trial—if there ever was one that passed through the furnace seven times heated—Mr. W. has a claim to be regarded as such a man.

Such is the simple and truthful account of this whole matter. It may be gainsayed; but I know that it cannot be overthrown, because it is founded in *fact*.

One glance at the treaty with England, before I have done with this part of Mr. W.'s official course.

By the treaty of Ghent, which terminated our last war with England, the *boundary* question was to be settled by *arbitration*. The matter was referred to the King of Holland. He made a decision; but the United States appealed from it, and Great Britain eventually gave it up. But still, by the terms of the treaty, *arbitration* must be continued until the matter was decided. What was now to be gained by it? Neither party had any disposition to repeat the experiment; neither believed that any thing important was to be gained by it. The affair seemed all but desperate.

But this was not the whole of the difficulty. Maine and Massachusetts had claims to be satisfied, which were of great interest to them. Most fully and earnestly did they believe in the justice of those claims, and insist on their being satisfied. In the other states also, there were many who thought with them, at least *theoretically*; but still the other states felt comparatively only a moderate interest in the question. There were some who even deemed it impolitic and wrong to occasion any dispute between England and our country, in respect to such a matter.

How could such confusion and contrariety be reduced to order, and all parties be satisfied? It was one of the most perplexing and difficult questions that statesmen ever have to meddle with. Nothing but the previous speech of Mr. W. on the claims of Maine and Massachusetts, could have given to the great mass of people in those two states, confidence that he could and would adjust the matter to general satisfaction.

In March 1842, Lord Ashburton arrived in this country. And although he and Mr. W. might have shortly agreed on the preliminaries of a treaty, nothing could be done that was effectual and satisfactory, without the special concurrence of Maine and Massachusetts.

How much negotiation and effort it cost the Secretary of State to get this accomplished, never has been fully known, and indeed could not all, without some violation of confidence, be told. Suffice it to say, that no one thing ever done by him as Secretary cost him more severe effort and solicitude than this. I hazard nothing in saying that, in all probability, no other man in our country could have brought it about so effectually as he did.

After all the preparatory efforts—after united delegations of Maine and Massachusetts had been appointed, and abundant labor bestowed in order to satisfy them—the treaty was at last made and concluded in August, 1842. The whole country at once breathed freer. The approbation of it was as universal as could be expected, and it remains so down to the present hour.

Yet satisfaction on account of *deliverance from war* seems hitherto to have been the predominant ground for approbation. The *positive good* of the treaty, in other respects, has never yet received the estimate that is due to it. I can only glance at some of the leading and most important particulars.

(1.) All the navigable streams on our borders were, by the old treaty, divided so that the line of separation ran in the *middle* of them, one half belonging to one country and the other half to the other. Of course it would not unfrequently happen, that where the channel runs upon our side or half, England was barred out from the navigation; and so *vice versa*. By the recent treaty, THE WHOLE *of the navigable waters are free to both countries.* The immeasurable importance to both countries of this emendation of the old treaty is evident. Yet England was reluctant at first to yield this point; and it cost not a little effort to accomplish the object that we desired.

(2.) As matters formerly were, an offender in either country might escape into the other, and he was safe from all molestation. By the new treaty, *extradition* has been fully agreed upon. The meaning of this is, that when a person commits an offence in one country and flies to the other, he can be demanded, and must be delivered up to be tried where the offence was committed. The incalculable importance of this with respect to the preservation of peace, and order, and kind feeling, between the two countries, must be plain to every thinking man. It is the same arrangement which exists between our states respectively, as to offences committed in them.

(3.) The great question of the *right of search*, which had occasioned one war, and bid fair to occasion another, was in a good measure, at least for some time to come, disposed of. Our squadron on the African coast is now a good and sufficient reason for permitting American vessels, trading there, to pass without a British search. I am informed by an officer in the African Colonization Society, that the thing works practically well there, notwithstanding some difficulties in the case, which, it was feared, might occur. At all events Great Britain has so long taken and maintained her ground there, in respect to this matter, that it could not be disposed of in any better way for the present, than it has been. Time and farther experience alone can fully settle this question.

Let any impartial man, now, closely examine and study this treaty, and say if any thing could be devised more honorable to both nations, yea, more advantageous to both? Are not the complete navigations of the border waters, and the extradition of offenders, equally important to both? Is it not as important that our Government, the first of all to declare against the slave-trade, should see to the execution of its own purposes, as that England should? Do we not give and enjoy the same rights as to merchant vessels? And Maine and Massachusetts—are they not satisfied that Great Britain has agreed to pay them, in her liberality, a price much greater for their lands than they could obtain in any other way? I repeat it, *it is a treaty equally honorable and advantageous to both parties.* Neither has any reason for regret—nothing to lessen the satisfaction which results from it. And so the mass of sensible men in both countries actually view the matter.

This is not only well but highly important. Treaties, where one party *has made a good bargain*, as the phrase is, in other words, where one party has greatly the advantage, so that the whole affair is really onerous to the other, such treaties are never kept long. Some pretence for a quarrel will speedily arise, as a matter of course, and then war, or a new negotiation, must take place. Let every lover of peace and of his country duly weigh these matters, and then say, if he can, how much better all is, in the present state of things, than spending unnumbered millions of money, shedding rivers of blood, embittering the feelings, for many years to come, of two great nations, related to each other as mother and daughter, and then leaving off the contest just where they began, would have been to those concerned, or to the world at large.

But let us return more immediately to Mr. Webster. It is a question which will be asked, and one that I will not try to shun, did Mr. W. remain stedfast to his *Whig* principles during all the time that he continued in the Cabinet?

Unhesitatingly I answer, yes; he was always, and invariably, the same that he had been.

Did he waver about the *fiscal* measures designed to relieve the country? Not in the least. We have his public and solemn assurance that he gave his advice *against* the vetos of the President. There was some hazard in this, considering how exasperated the President was, lest Mr. W. might thereby sacrifice his good will and confidence. Yet with Mr. W. it was a matter of principle and conscience, not to give any opinion that would compromise what he deemed to be the true interests of his country. He did not. The President would have been better pleased if Mr. W. had gone with him; but in consideration of the consistency which Mr. W. owed to himself, he overlooked his unwelcome advice. Has Mr. W. ever changed his opinion respecting any of these great measures, in relation to the circulating medium of the country—in regard to its fiscal concerns? The speech designated at the head of this article fully answers this question.

Where then is Mr. W.'s apostacy or indifference, in respect to the great measures of the Whig party? No where, not a trace of them can be found. Will it be said that his indifference was shown by his declining to leave the Cabinet? We have seen that he had other entirely different, and abundantly sufficient reasons, for declining to quit his place. Will it be said that we can find ground for accusation in the tenor of his letters of Sept. 11 and Sept. 13, 1841? If any one deems this so, I must respectfully solicit him to consider the condition in which Mr. W. was then placed. On the one hand, he knew, and none but he, what preparation-work had been done in England, and what the feelings of the then British Cabinet were toward him and his country. On the other, nothing could be done, unless the President remained so far satisfied with him as to give him his confidence, and thus aid, instead of impeding, the negotiation hoped for and expected. How could he come out, then, and say openly, in his letters, what he thought of the *veto*, or what of the President's consistency? It was impossible, unless he, with his eyes open, should consent to sacrifice the greater for the lesser good. He was bound in adamantine chains. The temper of the President would brook no opposition to his desperate measures. Mr. W. then was forced to confine himself to private advice, or give up the hope of serving his country in the manner that he had anticipated. He decided, therefore, to prefer his country's good to his own reputation with the more strenuous of the Whig party. Is there a man in all the country that does not now thank him for it? And if so, why should any burning desire be still felt, in the bosoms of some, to place him on the list of apostates from the Whig cause?

On the whole, I would now boldly make the appeal, and ask every man of candor, and ingenuousness, whether there ever was a statesman placed in more trying circumstances. I ask whether he could have said more than he did say, without risking "every thing" as to the objects he had in view. I do not say that, on the whole, it would not have been the wiser part to make no public communication relative to holding his place. But the pressure was immense, and absolutely intolerable. And if he must say any thing, how much more could he say than he has said? To justify his colleagues, publicly, would be certain to offend the President. Not that the latter wished to retain them. But still, he did not wish to have them resign, and give such reasons as they did. For Mr. W. then openly to justify these reasons, would deprive him of all opportunity to serve the country in the way that he expected.

Besides, it was Mr. W.'s deliberate judgment that resignation would disunite, weaken, and discomfit the Whig party, and therefore ought to be forborne. His judgment on this point has been shown by sad experience to be correct, whatever feeling his two letters may have excited. Shall we blame him for not saying that he concurred in the views of his colleagues, when he did not, and could not? At least every generous minded man, who can appreciate the dreadfully trying circumstances in which he was placed, will answer in the negative.

But the *Faneuil Hall speech*—that speech which cooled so many of Mr. W.'s ardent friends—what have you to say to that? What apology can be made for it?

I answer, then, in the first place, that no one has yet shown, or can show, that by far the greater portion of that speech is not sound policy and good Whig principle. This must be conceded. In fact there are only two points in it, or perhaps three, so far as I know, which have ever given Mr. W.'s friends any particular umbrage. First, Mr. W. virtually blamed the Whig party that they did not unite in some of the fiscal plans which followed those that were vetoed. I am aware that this could hardly fail to give some offence. But is not the view which he gave of this subject substantially correct and just? Has not the country suffered beyond computation in consequence of not having a general and sure circulating medium? Merchants have, at last, found out indeed a way for doing their own business, inasmuch as the government refused to aid them; and they will always do so, at last, if the government will only let them alone and not interfere with them. But they may suffer and have suffered incalculably before this could be accomplished. The simple truth seems to be that there was more of resentment than of judgment and sound discretion in rejecting all the fiscal measures that were proposed; yet I do not wonder, I never have wondered, that this was done, after such treatment as Congress had received from the President. Yet what Mr. W.

said at Faneuil Hall on this point, I doubt not was wholly true. But I have ever regretted, still, that it was said at that time and place. His auditors were not yet prepared to be told all the truth.

His second offence was, the expression of his disapprobation, that a nomination of President had been made in a large caucus, by a kind of acclamation. This could not fail to give offence, at the time, to those who had belonged to the caucus. Yet such has been, at last, the conviction of the public in relation to this subject, that they have virtually repealed the doings of that caucus, and agreed to submit the question to the general delegation of Whigs, who are to assemble at Baltimore. Is not this saying something in favor of Mr. W.'s sagacity and discrimination? It seems like it. Indeed he was clearly in the right. But still, considering the excited state of feeling, it would perhaps have been better to say this at another time, and in another way.

A third offence is, the manner in which he spoke of the tariff, from 1832 to 1840—that is, the *descending* scale of it. It will be remembered that he opposed this strongly, at the time when it was agitated; and he has thought badly of it ever since, on account of its deleterious influence on the manufactures of our country. What he said in respect to this matter was conceded by Congress to be virtually true, in the establishment of a new tariff. That some have interpreted his speech as designed to give Mr. Clay a thrust under the fifth rib is, I must believe, more to be attributed to their suspicion than to Mr. W.'s design. It is not the manner of this gentleman to give the stabs of an assassin. When, where, how, has he ever done it?

Let me make the appeal now to every man of candor in the community, and ask him,—after all the suspicions that had been thrown out respecting Mr. W., in some of the violent Whig papers; after all the obloquy even which some of them had heaped upon him; after the doubts and fears which some of his warm friends had for a while more or less admitted; and being conscious at the same time of his steadfast adherence to the principles always advocated by him, and that he had sacrificed himself, if indeed he was, or was to be, sacrificed on the altar of his country's good—must not Mr. W., after all this, be either more or less than human, if he did not feel any degree of excitement? This led him to say things respecting certain measures, that are now confessed to be true; but which a large portion of his audience were not then prepared to relish. This is the head and front of his offending. And is there a generous spirit in all our country that will not overlook a matter like this, in circumstances so excessively trying?

Let us now look, for a moment, at other things which Mr. W. had to do, before he left the Cabinet. We shall see reason enough, as I think, to justify him for *protracting* his stay somewhat longer than Mr. Clay originally advised him to do.

No one will question the immensity of labor which the treaty with England cost. But this was far from being all the burden that Mr. W. was called to sustain.

France had recently taken possession, very unexpectedly to Europe and to this country, of the Marquesas Islands. It may easily be conceived how Great Britain, with her spirit of colonizing, and the rights which she claims in relation to this subject, would feel. No sooner was this done by France, than she cast her eye upon the Sandwich Islands, as a kind of offset. There was at least some show of right in this case—Great Britain had the *right of discovery*, so called—discovery by the famous Captain Cook. She had always felt that a kind of guardian relation over these islands belonged to her, although she had not practised the active exercise of guardianship. Yet no sooner had the French settled down in the Marquesas, than she devised a plan to make a similar descent upon the Sandwich Islands. Not to subjugate them, it may be, by war; not to enforce her guardian power against the will of the people; but to persuade them to choose her as a protector and a guardian. Lord Paulet was inconsiderately entrusted with an expedition to the islands. This rash and ignorant manager made his debut there in the style that he had been familiar with, not improbably, in the cock-pit and the arena of pugilism. Not knowing the difference between prudent management and cock-turkey fierceness, he dashed upon the poor islanders, to their utter astonishment and confusion. Yet how came he to dash there? And since he has done it, has he been reprimanded and dismissed from the service? Not a word of all this. "He meant to do right; he meant to show a zeal for the interest of British subjects; he meant to spread the terror of the British power the world around." All this, and more like to it, has been said in and out of Parliament. What does all this show? It shows that Paulet, Captain Bobadil as he was, went to the Sandwich Islands on an errand which would cover in part the sins that he had committed.

Of this design of Great Britain Mr. W. had been for some time aware. Of course, when the ambassadors of the King of those islands came to Washington he was ready at once to acknowledge the independence and the supremacy of the islands. Forthwith he wrote to the British Ministry, telling them what we had done in America. He stated to Lord Aber-

deen that five-sixths of all the ships which go to Hawaii are from America, and that the United States had in a great measure civilized and Christianized the whole population, and were still expending many thousands of dollars every year, in order to complete this object. Of course, he added, if there were any claims on the part of justice and equity, to the guardianship of the Sandwich Islands, those claims belonged to us. He appealed to the magnanimity of the British Cabinet, therefore, in relation to this matter, and solicited them to follow our example, in acknowledging the independence of the islands. He closed by stating, that under all the circumstances, he did not see how this country could stand still and see the Sandwich Islands taken possession of by another.

The magnanimity of England is not often appealed to in vain. Lord Aberdeen saw at once the predicament in which England would be placed, in the eyes of Europe, and of this country. The result is known. Ships were despatched forthwith to tear down British flags, and hoist that of Kamehameha, which is now waving over all the country. We trust it will continue to wave, so long as our country does its duty.

Nor was this all. Our ambassador at the Court of St. James interposed his good offices, in accordance with the wishes of Mr. W., and through the medium of the Queen of Belgium, the daughter of Louis Philippe, to whom the Sandwich Island ambassadors were introduced, an acknowledgement of independence was readily obtained from the King of France.

But there was another, and a delicate matter between our country and Spain, which came upon Mr. W.'s hands. In her wretched condition, Spain became unable, and of course reluctant to pay the remainder of monies due in the matter of indemnification. Mr. W. conferred with the Spanish ambassador. The latter acknowledged the claim, but stated the utter impossibility of satisfying it. Mr. W. at length informed him of certain things done for the welfare of his country, (which cannot by reason of propriety and delicacy be detailed here) that gave us peculiar claims upon Spain. These were generously acknowledged, and provision was eventually made for the interest of the sum still due. This has been punctually paid.

In the midst of all these matters our Chinese relations came to be things of high interest and importance. Great Britain had virtually made the conquest of China, and imposed her own terms of peace. She had opened for her trade four other places besides Canton, almost as large as that city. What should America do at such a crisis? Must we remain with liberty to trade only in Canton, and let our goods go only in British bottoms to other places?—or should we stand upon our own footing, and enjoy our own rights, without any interposing power?

Of this there could be no question. Mr. W. at once recommended the President to lay before the houses of Congress the project of a Chinese mission. He did so. It was carried almost without a division. Mr. Cushing was at this time a great favorite with the President. His ability to do the duty of ambassador to China was not to be questioned. Mr. W. acceded to his appointment. The next step was, to furnish him with *instructions*. It took some two months to accomplish this. Never was any portion of Mr. W.'s life more laboriously spent, than in preparing to furnish them. The difficulty of getting adequate information was almost insuperable, in consequence of foreigners having always been excluded from the country. At length Mr. W. achieved the work, so far as it could be done, and the instructions were dated the 8th of May, 1843.

THAT VERY DAY WAS THE DATE OF MR. W.'S RESIGNATION IN THE CABINET.

Now why, let me ask, did Mr. W. resign the first day, yea, hour, that all these great matters were off his hands? Why did he resign at all? If he had left the Whig ranks, if he had ceased to sympathise with this party, why did he not continue in office? The only answer is the one that he has given; and this is, that "he is a Whig, a Massachusetts Whig, a Faneuil Hall Whig." The great services for his country were now done. He had thrown himself into the breach, at the peril even of political life, at the peril of his character and influence as a statesman, and had saved his country from war, and established all her foreign relations. Even the affair of Mexico is not to be forgotten—a very troublesome affair, but easily disposed of by him. All was now peace, and was likely to be so. He might go then where his honest political convictions carried him; and that was, to return to the ranks of Massachusetts Whigs, from which indeed some had excluded him, but without good reason, and against all true liberality and generosity of feeling.

And now it is time to close this *coup d'œil* of Mr. Webster's administration. How could I do any justice to him, or to others, in a shorter compass than I have taken?

I make the appeal now to all that is called candor, and justice, and liberality, and truth, and magnanimity, whether this distinguished statesman has been properly treated. I ask whether the violent Whig papers, some of which are still hinting their suspicions, if not venting their obloquy, are to be any longer upheld and justified in the course which they pursue. There is no man in the country, there never has been, who has done it so much

important diplomatic service, during the same length of time, that Mr. W. was Secretary of State. There is none, to say the least, more able to do it. Why then should he be abused for not having played the part of an obstreperous Whig, at a time when such a part would have defeated every thing that he has done? I ask for a rational, considerate, candid, generous answer to these questions.

It is time that the community were possessed of just and proper information, in relation to these things. I have laid before them a true account of them. It is time that Mr. W. had some more ample justice done to his character and his labors. Nothing but a painful sense of the injustice done him has drawn these remarks from me; injustice, not designed at all, on the part of most, but done for want of adequate information. I hope it is not too late to have this whole matter righted in the eyes of the community. At least I shall be deeply affected on account of the injustice and folly of party spirit, if it cannot be.

I cannot conclude without openly avowing that I have no electioneering objects in view. I disclaim and abjure them. Simple justice is all I ask for, in present circumstances. I have not engaged in this *expose*, I must also say, by any procurement, request, or effort whatever, of Mr. Webster. Neither directly nor indirectly has he excited me, or tempted me, to make it. Whatever may come of my efforts, or however they may be estimated, no responsibility attaches to him.

Mr. W. now stands, indeed, a simple freeman, unchanged, unbought, freely, fully, a Whig of Massachusetts. He is a private citizen only; and he never will be any thing more, until there is a general conviction that will do him some justice, if not exhibit some generosity. He asks for no remuneration. He wishes for no office. But he does believe, and must naturally cherish the hope, that sooner or later some justice will be done him. He does not even ask for this. But has he not a right to expect it? I can only add, that in my view, our country is bound in this case to do justice. The sooner the better. Such men as Mr. W. are not to be found every day; and at all events our country does not so abound with them that we can afford to cast any of them away.

CIVIS.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 011 895 621 7